United Nations E/CN.17/2006/5/Add.2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2005

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Fourteenth session
1-12 May 2006
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2006-2007

Discussion papers submitted by major groups

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Contribution by children and youth**

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–6	2
II.	Once upon our swiftly warming planet	7–11	3
III.	Energy for sustainable development	12–23	3
IV.	Industrial development	24–30	6
V.	Climate change	31–47	8
VI.	Air pollution and atmosphere	48–56	11
VII.	Conclusion	57–58	13

* E/CN.17/2006/1.

** Members from youth organizations around the world that came together to form the "Ad Hoc Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development Youth Caucus" have contributed to the present paper. Organizations directly contributing to the paper are: Creative Response of Youth for Solutions to HIV/AIDS, Education and Environmental Problems; Development Partnership International; Dutch National Youth Council; Future-Hope Community Project; Gaia Trust; Interact Rotary International; Jagvillhabostad.nu (Housing for youth); National Federation of Youth Organizations in Bangladesh; Council of Nigerian Youths; Nature and Youth Denmark Policy Reforms Research Advocacy and Participation; Salvage Youth Potential Development; Sierra Youth Coalition/Coalition Jeunesse Sierra; Woodcraft Folk; Youth Alliance for Future Energy; Young Friends of the Earth; Council for Renewable Energy Nigeria; and Youth Environmental Network/Reseau environnemental des jeunes. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

05-65359 (E) 120106

I. Introduction

1. As youth, we are inheriting a world plagued by atmospheric pollution and climate change, outcomes perpetuated by unsustainable industrial development and uses of energy. We believe that sustainably using the Earth's resources is our duty as safe-keepers for future generations. We are committed to participating in decision-making and in implementing solutions to ameliorate today's problems.

2. The present paper outlines our concerns, including progress and best practices, under the thematic cluster of issues for the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

A. On energy for sustainable development

3. Youth in developing countries stress the need for renewable energy as a catalyst for job creation and education opportunities for youth and make the case that sustainable rural development is dependent on alternative energy. Youth from developed countries report on the positive impact young people are having in raising awareness of the need for energy efficiency and in bringing about the transition to clean, renewable energy sources on campuses and within communities, and call for greatly increased funding for these effective projects.

B. On industrial development

4. Youth recognize the need for sustainable job creation and opportunities for young people within industrial development, and emphasize the need to ensure long-term environmental sustainability of industries. Small-scale and youth-led initiatives are vital to poverty eradication, and microfinance is a key tool in creating sustainable opportunities for young people.

C. On climate change

5. Young people, who are witnessing the impacts of climate change first-hand, criticize the lack of widespread progress on this vital issue for our future and present some of the projects young people have created to lead the way towards the sustainable future we need, from student-led emissions-reduction initiatives on campuses to community-led microgeneration projects in developing countries. Finally, youth call for an end to the continued subsidization of fossil fuels, currently one of the greatest barriers to sustainable development in this area.

D. On air pollution

6. Youth are engaged in lobbying for environmentally friendly cars, bike lanes and cheaper fares for public transportation. Young people will continue to play an active role in educating the public about cleaner cooking fuels, walking, biking and car-sharing. Youth organizations also express their desire to partner with Governments to raise awareness about the causes of asthma, including air pollution, on World Asthma Day.

II. Once upon our swiftly warming planet

7. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992,[1] when many of us were only just born, it was agreed that:

> "The involvement of today's youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21... It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures."[1]

8. As we move towards the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the commitment of youth to participating in and implementing action for sustainable development is both stronger and more crucial than ever. As the "future generation" in the classic definition of "sustainable development", our ability to meet our own needs is now being compromised by current trends in energy, air pollution, industrial development and climate change. As inheritors of a swiftly warming planet, it is with urgency that we join with other major groups to record progress in these areas. In this short account, we tell about the obstacles, constraints and challenges experienced and anticipated by youth.

9. To prepare this paper, youth organizations from around the world were invited to submit their experiences. The story we tell here is actually only a small part of a much bigger tale. Conspicuous in their absence are stories told by youth in the Arctic and in the most rural parts of developing countries. These are also the young people likely to be most disproportionately affected by problems and challenges of climate change, industrial development and poor energy practices. Because our exchange for the preparation for this paper took place over the Internet, many stories have been left untold. Between now and the fourteenth session of the Commission, we commit ourselves to gathering these voices in order to make our story more complete.

10. The narrative theme for this paper is inspired by the Youth Forum held as part of the thirty-third session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in October 2005. There, youth from 128 countries adopted a declaration acknowledging the significance of indigenous knowledge and intergenerational learning in sustainable development. Sustainable development is itself an intergenerational concept, since each generation inherits the world from its ancestors and leaves it for its children. As youth, we have inherited not just the misfortune of a warming planet, but also the wisdom of societies that have lived in harmony.

11. In preparation for the review year at the fourteenth session, we tell our stories with the desire to be heard, but we are also ready to hear the stories others are waiting to tell.

III. Energy for sustainable development

> "There is no sustainable rural development without alternative energy"
>
> Salvage Youth Potential Development

12. Figuratively, youth are the biggest source of untapped energy and innovation to address issues of sustainable development. Yet many youth organizations, particularly in the global South, report marginalization on energy issues. African youth, in particular, express frustration that energy is equated with profit and that the energy business is concerned only with profit rather than with finding creative and sustainable solutions to improve the peoples' lives through the introduction of alternative energy sources. In contrast, for youth in developed countries, energy consumption may seem unlimited. Concerned youth are finding creative ways to educate their peers on issues of energy consumption. Some stories of what we, as youth, have experienced are set out below.

A. Case study: the multifunctional platform

13. The multifunctional platform is a 10 horse power diesel engine mounted on a steel chassis that can power various agro-processing machinery, such as a corn mill or an oil press. It can also drive an alternator to charge batteries, power a water pump or light up to 200 bulbs. Furthermore, it can power hand tools such as saws and welders, spurring small-scale industrial development. Multifunctional platforms are well established in Mali as part of a decade-long United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) initiative.

14. The multifunctional platform is much more than just an energy tool. It is chiefly designed to ease the burden on rural women and youth through the mechanization of tedious agricultural tasks. In 350 Malian villages with platforms, women's average annual income has tripled from $34 to $101. Women have saved between two and six hours of time per day, and the attendance and performance of school age girls has increased since they have not had to stay at home to help their mothers. Men benefit from the use of electricity for hand tools and creation of jobs as operators and repair artisans. And the entire community benefits from the introduction of the first electrical light in a dark village.[2]

B. Progress

15. In the global North and South, youth have taken the initiative of informing their peers about energy sources and consumption. Here are some examples:

(a) Creative Response of Youth for Solutions to HIV/AIDS, Education and Environmental Problems, a Nigerian youth organization, informs youth in rural areas about alternative sources of fuel that are cleaner and cheaper and more easily transported to the rural population within a short period of time. The organization would like to learn more about alternative energy sources, including solar energy, which is a good energy solution, so that it can pass information along to the communities in which it works. The organization's Future-Hope Community Project is also involved in advocacy to rural areas to raise the awareness of the young and to encourage their active involvement in energy issues;

(b) In the Netherlands, youth is being educated to be more energy aware at home and to learn about the challenges faced in other countries. The case study is presented in paragraph 16 below.

C. Case study: Dutch youth get energized

16. At the Dutch National Youth Council, sustainable development, especially energy, is an important issue. As part of the Council's "Get energized!" campaign, young volunteers inform other young people about ways to reduce energy consumption and how to make their holidays abroad more environmentally friendly. At the moment several forums are being organized, at which politicians, experts and students can share ideas on how to produce energy and reduce energy demand in the Netherlands, and to discuss how China's increasing energy-consumption is changing world politics and threatening the environment. The Council also organizes workshops on energy reduction in secondary schools nationwide. For the coming local elections, the Council is organizing a campaign to encourage politicians to make their municipalities more energy-aware. Sustainable development is something that seems to be in fashion at the moment, but it focuses increasingly on poverty reduction and less on the environmental side of sustainable development. Energy is not only a socio-political issue, but also a technical issue. The Council believes that we need to raise awareness and to lobby Governments not to forget the environmental side of sustainable development. Peer education is also an effective way to educate people in the creation and use of sustainable energy (the Dutch National Youth Council can be visited at www.jeugdraad.nl).

D. Obstacles and constraints to youth implementation

17. An African youth organization, Salvage Youth Potential Development reports that youth community development on energy issues are quite a challenge. Involved youth are often unable to obtain funds and those who are committed must support projects out of their own pockets.

18. Another remaining challenge is the centralization of grid energy, which hampers energy distribution to the poor. Effective small-scale rural industrial development is possible through decentralized alternative energy sources.

19. The Danish youth organization Nature and Youth suggests that while strong efforts have been made towards sustainable energy use, a change in Government has brought about a refocusing of resources. For example, because there is now less focus on wind energy, the average citizen doesn't see that there is a problem and so effecting change, particularly among young people, is difficult. For the average Danish youth who has never experienced an energy shortage, such a situation is rather difficult to imagine. Finally, youth in Denmark report that while it is relatively easy to obtain financial support for projects on policy advocacy, if a project concerns actions to directly reduce energy consumption, which in the long run will save money, funds are limited.

20. Many youth in developing countries do not have access to a steady supply of energy to take care of their day to day needs. Energy sources in developing countries now are seriously low and need to be improved if the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved in the near future.

E. Lessons learned and new opportunities for youth[3]

21. Young people are cost-effective peer-to-peer educators. They can provide general information about energy efficiency and alternative energy sources in their communities.

22. Young people, with the support of adults, can establish and maintain small sustainable energy generating plants. Small-scale hydro plants, multifunctional platforms and cleaner cooking fuel are ideal income generators for youth. This job creation initiative will positively influence local development.

23. Youth must be more involved in decision-making, particularly on an issue such as energy, which is so crucial for the future. The Youth Alliance for Future Energy, working in the field of youth policy engagement, formed to organize the Youth Energy Summit 2004 just before the International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn, Germany (Renewables 2004). Many young people from the Alliance who participated in the International Conference as observers addressed the plenary at the opening session and lobbied to influence the policy decisions at the international level.

IV. Industrial development

24. The social and economic changes brought about by industrialization are closely intertwined with technological innovation, in particular the development of large-scale energy production. Since the Industrial Revolution, the marked increase in energy consumption has produced an exponential increase in carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels. Industry has a key role to play in furthering development as a supplier of goods and services required by society and as a source of job creation. We must make sure that industrial development is sustainable.

A. Progress

25. Youth are actively engaged in developing sustainable industries worldwide. For example:

(a) In the Philippines, youth have established small-scale industries to make furniture from natural resources, including reeds and grass canes;

(b) In the Netherlands, project SPARK focuses on youth employment and microcredits. Young people are encouraged to start their own businesses, which can be related to industry;[4]

(c) In Nigeria, in order to create potential employment and to train youth in sustainable industrial practices, young technicians are educated on the site of a small hydro power plant in how to establish and maintain the plant.

26. Youth advocate development that ensures the safety of human health and the ecological integrity of our planet and promote certain types of industrial development. For example, sustainable agriculture is an area where many gains are to be made. As the number of people in developed countries buying organic products increases, and more sustainable and ecologically safe farming techniques used, the eutrophication of streams and lakes may be decreased.

B. Obstacles and constraints to youth implementation

27. There are also certain cases of industrial development that directly oppose both sustainable development and the development of youth. For example:

(a) The textile industry and certain agricultural sectors (especially cocoa, cotton and coffee) are industries that exploit young workers. Free the Children, a for-youth, by-youth organization, has been created to address these issues;[5]

(b) Thousands of youth die in armed conflicts each year as a result of oil conflicts;

(c) The immediate and long-term health of young people is threatened by certain types of industrial development as a result of pollution, linking the topic to atmosphere and air pollution.

28. Youth also experience obstacles and constraints when they try to advance implementation of industrial development. A number of observations were made in this regard:

(a) The role of young people as innovators and the need for sustainable entrepreneurship is often overlooked. Governments and businesses can be more supportive of young peoples' initiatives to bring sustainable industrial development to our communities. In particular, Governments have a special role to play as incubators of youth-run businesses;

(b) Young people experience difficulty securing credit, materials, resources and microfinance. There is a lack of government-funded youth employment strategies. These could be supported at low cost by youth-run sustainable businesses and social enterprises;

(c) In many parts of the world, there is a lack of training in business education and mentorship opportunities, skills and training apprenticeships, internships or cooperative work placements;

(d) Particularly in developed countries, there is a market for sustainably produced goods, although these products are almost always more expensive and therefore less accessible to young people and to the general population. Governments should remove subsidies to products that are less sustainable and should provide incentives to products that are sustainable, such as clean renewable energy production;

(e) It is difficult for youth to take part in industrial development or influence industries directly. As a result, some youth feel that the most effective way of influencing unsustainable industries is to refuse to buy their products. Youth are a large market. In North America and Europe students have run successful boycotting campaigns.

C. Lessons learned and new opportunities for youth implementation

29. In a few years today's young people will be leaders in the field of industrial development. But youth do not intend to wait for the obstacles and constraints just highlighted to be meaningfully addressed — they are committed to acting now and playing a larger role in making industries more sustainable.

30. Youth can play an important role in awareness-raising on different subjects, such as organic agriculture, sustainable clothing and sustainable business. Youth should also lobby Governments to stimulate industries to lower the prices of their environmentally friendly products, for instance through subsidies.

V. Climate change

The challenge of our generation

> "the world is facing a threat unlike anything ever experienced before in human history"
>
> Declaration on Climate Change from Youth of the Arctic[6]

31. Our future is being compromised. Climate change represents the single biggest threat to the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Every day we burn fossil fuels in our cars, our homes and our power stations, continuing to drive up the atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases at a dangerous rate. As a result, our climate is changing: extreme weather occurs more often in the form of droughts, severe rainfall, unprecedented temperature extremes and record numbers of hurricanes. These changes (though gradual up to now) are beginning to affect our ability to produce food and could trigger major migrations of peoples. Youth around the world, and especially those in the most fragile ecosystems, are witnessing these changes first-hand and are deeply concerned about the slow pace of action when we so urgently need to break our fossil-fuel addiction.

A. Progress

32. By reducing our personal greenhouse gas emissions, engaging in activities with lower environmental impacts and making conscious choices, youth are living in ways that protect our world and trying to ensure that it will be one we want to live in.

33. Youth groups in the Arctic are challenging plans to exploit fossil fuels, including the proposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska in the United States of America, the proposed Mackenzie Valley Gas Pipeline Project in the Northwest Territories of Canada and oil drilling in the Lensky region of the Sakha Republic in the Russian Federation.[6]

34. Some groups, such as Youth Alliance for Future Energy, believe the best way to make our activities carbon neutral is by buying certificates and supporting energy projects in the developing world. Other groups advocate biogas and hope to incorporate information and communication technology, alternative energy and community information centres. The Salvage Youth Potential Development group in Kenya says that youth in that country are not informed about climate change. Poverty, lack of information, underemployment and lack of resources are all reasons why some youth are unconcerned. The Gaia Trust (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and the Salvage Youth Potential Development group both report that youth are not always well informed about renewable energy. Clearly the potential for more widespread education on climate change issues is huge, and peer

education can play a valuable role, especially in energy efficiency initiatives, a vital part of climate change mitigation.

35. Some youth feel defeated, that their actions are useless without large-scale policy change. Therefore, youth must be the advocates of policy change. Youth Alliance for Future Energy, Youth Friends of the Earth and the Renewable Energy Council all support this view.

36. Youth are actively engaged in advocacy and education about the issue of climate change. Representatives of the Future-Hope Community Project in Nigeria expressed the sentiment that with few resources, youth can be very effective in advocacy work. Youth have also been actively involved in staging protests against large oil development projects and exploitative environmental practices.

37. European youth groups such as Young Friends of the Earth and European Youth For Action recognized the competition "The Bet" as a positive project that encourages less climate-threatening lifestyles. The Bet, which aimed at reducing the carbon dioxide emissions in schools, bet that it could reduce emissions by 5 per cent in five months. The project also involved the participation of developing countries, since it was advocated by the Dutch National Youth Council, the Youth Alliance for Future Energy (Nigeria), the Young Friends of the Earth (Nigeria) and the Council for Renewable Energy (Nigeria).

38. In terms of awareness-raising and education, dedicated youth are leading the way within their communities and countries. In 2003, a group of 30 young people, the Climate Change Caravan, cycled across Canada. Their mission was to educate and activate citizens to take responsibility for global climate change. The Youth Environmental Network of Canada[7] distributes $100,000 worth of microgrants annually to youth groups who run community-based action projects related to climate change. While this work highlights the excellent endeavours of youth to realize a clean, sustainable energy future, there is a huge need for increased capacity in the area of education and youth-led awareness raising projects.

39. Students are also engaged in getting their campuses to buy clean energy and improve energy efficiency. This is done by working with administrators through a multi-stakeholder process to enact and implement major clean energy purchases and energy efficiency retrofits and by calling on the student body to pay for clean energy themselves. On some campuses students are now going far beyond improving just energy use to produce full campus sustainability audits and action plans for campus-wide sustainability, working towards campuses that are a model for the low-emissions, sustainable society we need to create.[8]

B. Obstacles and constraints to youth implementation

> "Different working attitudes (often caused by cultural differences), the lack of opportunities to meet and language problems are some of the issues we face as youth."
>
> Future-Hope Youth Project

40. Gaia Trust believes that the biggest problem for youth in implementing projects on climate change is lack of funding. Particularly in developing countries, resources are available for tangible projects with immediate results, for example,

projects involving the disabled, drug addicts, youth criminals or other socially excluded groups, but it is hard to find funds for climate change, as it is not seen as a political priority or as a "vote winner". In Nigeria, the Future-Hope Youth Project sees climate change as an issue to which the Government pays little or no attention to since it does not benefit the ruling class. The organization also states that business finds it difficult to support projects with a poor return on investment.

41. Youth Alliance for Future Energy, Youth Friends of the Earth and the Renewable Energy Council point out that a clear difficulty with climate change issues is that they are international. As such, working internationally to address the challenge is necessary, but also more difficult. These are issues that youth must address. The use of the Internet can be very helpful, but it does not solve all problems — it includes many, but also excludes many.

42. Gaia Trust points out that climate change impedes progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goal 7 (environmental sustainability), the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and other goals for children and youth. The impacts of climate change are now also causing forced migrations and leading to instability in the most vulnerable countries. In addition, Salvage Youth Potential Development reports that the effects of climate change include more air pollution, infectious disease and bacteria, which increase health risks:

> "This problem requires an adaptation of environmental values, strong policies and a strong youth voice, which youth recognize in each other and in leaders like Ken Saro Wiwa."

43. The group Nature and Youth in Denmark reports that climate change can impede progress towards obtaining the Millennium Development Goals. This could happen in a number of ways:

(a) Climate changing faster than agricultural technology progresses; as things stand, research on sustainable agriculture such as ecological techniques is already lagging behind research on traditional industrialized agriculture. This gap might widen further if (or when) we are hit by rapid changes in climate: this depends upon how funds for agricultural research are applied now and into the future.

(b) As the climate changes, it is likely to become more extreme; with hotter and drier summers, and more rain. Some parts of the world, such as Denmark, may experience a colder climate. This will in all lead to more energy consumption to sustain current standards and ways of living: more need for air-conditioning in some areas, more heating in others; more need for flood-prevention measures; and more irrigation systems, provided that we do not find ways to reorganize or resettle societies, which might offset some of these effects.

44. Woodcraft Folk (United Kingdom) notes that "education and the work of young people to reduce their own emissions must be matched by serious commitments by Government, especially to end perverse subsidies, for example public financing of new oil development projects such as the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline". As youth, we are rising to the challenge of climate change, but our efforts are frequently being negated by the continued development of new unsustainable energy resources, a substantial obstacle to sustainable development.

C. Lessons learned and new opportunities for youth implementation

45. In November 2005, prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, young people from around the world met in Montreal, Canada, at an international youth summit to discuss the issues of climate change and to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties. The declaration they adopted[9] calls for minimum binding emissions reduction targets of 30 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050 for developed countries. This is the scale of the challenge we face within the broader sustainable development community, which has a vital role to play in mitigating, as well as adapting to, climate change. We commit ourselves to working with the youth summit team to bring the experiences and voices from the summit to the fourteenth session of the Commission and engaging these youth in the work of the Commission.

46. It should be noted that the level of funding provided to youth organizing before and during the summit by the Canadian Government as the host country was widely appreciated, and youth organizers at the Conference of the Parties reported that it made a substantial difference in engaging youth from developing countries in the process. We hope to see this level of support for youth engagement, which is typically underfunded, continue at both future Conferences of the Parties and at the sessions of the Commission, at which our voices are so necessary.

47. Gaia Trust (United Kingdom) states that youth can play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change by advocating alternative systems. Future-Hope Community Project states that youth can play the role of the society's "conscience" by teaching the populace how to preserve the environment and why it must be done. The Dutch National Youth Council notes the vital role of youth in awareness-raising and teaching the importance of wise personal choices. In the future, youth are the ones that will really feel the consequences of a changing climate. Youth in developing countries that do not really contribute to climate change are the first to suffer from it.

VI. Air pollution and atmosphere

48. It is estimated that three million people die as the result of air pollution each year worldwide. Research shows that fatal respiratory illnesses disproportionately affect youth. Industrial activity is the main source of air pollution. In fact, the leading chronic illness among children and youth in the United States is asthma.

49. Globally, almost three billion people rely on biomass (wood, charcoal, crop residues and dung) and coal as their primary source of domestic energy. Exposure to indoor air pollution from the combustion of solid fuels is an important cause of disease and mortality in developing countries among youth and women.

50. Soil particulate concentration, a form of air pollution, is increasing in areas affected by desertification as a result of climate change.

A. Progress

51. Young people are taking a lead mobilizing for cleaner air through the following activities:

(a) The annual International Youth Summit on Sustainable Urban Transportation, the goal of which is to inform youth and send them back to their communities to encourage local action on sustainable transportation issues. In 2004, the Summit took place from 26 to 31 May in Ottawa. It brought together 80 Canadian youth, ages 17 to 24, with participants from around the globe to discuss the importance of sustainable transportation in our communities (see http://www.cutaactu.ca);

(b) Critical Mass is a movement that encourages cycling and is gaining popularity worldwide. Every month, young people in 409 cities around the world gather to show their support for sustainable and healthy transportation (see http://www.critical-mass.org);

(c) Each year on 22 September, people from around the world gather to celebrate World Carfree Day and to show alternatives to the automobile. The "official" carfree day is 22 September, but many cit s hold activities all week or on other days. With the ever-expanding European Union-sponsored European Mobility Week (which isn't just European anymore), the idea of dedicating at least one day a year to promoting alternatives to car use seem to be catching on. Last year there were an estimated 1,500 events in 40 countries (see http://www.worldcarfree.net);

(d) Walking school bus, a group of children that walk to school with one or more adults, has become popular in much of North America (see http://www.walkingschoolbus.org);

(e) The Friends of the Earth Berlin Chapter has a project that teaches children about road safety (on bicycle or foot) so that there is no need for their parents to take them around by car;

(f) European Youth for Action organizes an annual bike tour to raise awareness about the harmful effects of cars on local air pollution. Every year for the past 15 years the tour runs for 2 months, covers around 6,000 kilometres, and talks to thousands of individuals about air pollution and climate change (see http://www.eyfa.org);

(g) Young people in North America have been known to throw parties on subway cars and buses in order to encourage the use of public transportation by youth;

(h) Hitchhiking, car-pooling and ride boards are all ways that youth transport themselves for long-distances when cycling, walking and public transport is not an option;

(i) Young people on campuses have successfully campaigned to get Universal Transit Passes (U-Pass) for students in their university/college. A U-Pass gives students enrolled in participating post-secondary institutions unlimited access to local transit. Programmes are typically funded through mandatory fees that eligible students pay each term in which they are registered. Fees are transferred to the local transit authority to fund the required transit service. Because fees are collected from a large participant base, U-Pass prices are lower than the amount

students would otherwise pay for monthly passes or tickets over the course of a term. The U-Pass price charged to students depends on a variety of factors, which differ among municipalities, transit systems and post-secondary institutions.

B. Obstacles and constraints to youth implementation

52. There are limited programmes targeting the design and implementation of effective technologies and intervention programmes that reduce exposure and disease due to indoor air pollution resulting from domestic energy use.

53. Often there are cultural obstacles to hitching, lift-sharing and car-pooling in developed countries. There are often cultural pressures exerted upon young people in developing countries to drive cars instead of walking, riding a bike and using public transit. Public transport services can be poorly integrated and expensive for youth.

54. Obstacles to promoting cycling among youth include:

(a) When a bike is stolen or vandalized, authorities do not take the offence as seriously as if it were a vehicle. This practice discourages youth from owning bikes. There are not enough places to park bikes in city centres;

(b) Cycling can be dangerous on roads without bike lanes ;

(c) There is a lack of places to shower and change for youth at school and in the workplace;

(d) The city of London prohibits the locking of bikes against railings with the excuse of preventing vandalism, which forces people to use more expensive forms of public transport. Making cities as bike-friendly as possible is one of the keys to reducing car use and improving air quality.

C. Lessons learned and new opportunities for youth implementation

55. Youth can play a vital role as actors of change. Besides lobbying for environmentally friendly cars, more bike lanes and cheaper fares for public transportation, youth can continue to take a role in shaping public opinion in favour of walking, biking and car-sharing.

56. World Asthma Day, 3 May, was declared in recognition of all the people in the world who live with asthma. Youth organizations would like to partner with Governments to raise awareness about the causes of asthma.

VII. Conclusion

57. Youth today find ourselves heirs to a swiftly warming planet. From previous generations we have inherited the result of decades of industrial growth, energy systems and consumption built on energy sources that are, in the truest sense of the word, unsustainable. Climate change and the need to move rapidly towards truly environmentally and socially sustainable economies is the challenge of our generation, and time is running out.

58. If our inheritance is a swiftly warming planet, our legacy will be a more sustainable Earth. It is imperative that we participate actively in decision-making processes because today's decisions affect our lives and have implications for our futures. We look forward to continued engagement on issues of climate change, energy, industrial development and atmosphere before, during and following the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Notes

[1] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Engineers Without Borders, Canada, http://www.ewb.ca/content/en/index2.shtml.

[3] Based on examples given by Youth Alliance for Future Energy, Young Friends of the Earth and Council for Renewable Energy, Nigeria.

[4] See http://www.youthspark.org/.

[5] http://www.freethechildren.org/.

[6] Declaration made on *18 November 2005*, *see* http://www.taiga.net/ayn/declaration.html.

[7] See http://www.yen-rej.org.

[8] See http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen.

[9] See http://www.beyondkyoto.org for more information on the summit and international youth declaration.